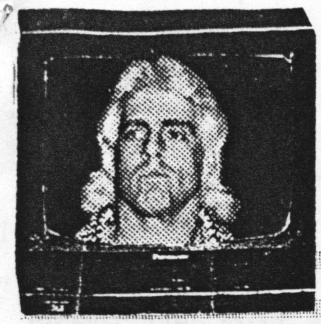

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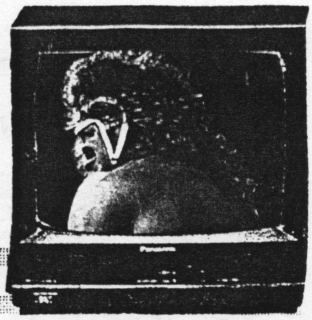

Matwatch Editorial

OUR VIEW OF THE FUTURE OF THE NWA

In the wake of CAPITOL COMBAT and in the chaotic crisis-a-minute atmosphere with which the senior wrestling promotion in America continues to operate, MATWATCH presents its sixth editorial, in which we detail our view, albeit partially radical, of what the NWA needs for survival:

MATWATCH believes that for financial and creative reasons, World Championship Wrestling should look at a seven-point proposal for its future. The points involve the use of outside consulting, television and a revamping of the use of pay-cable.

1. ELIMINATE ARENA SHOWS EXCEPT FOR FRIDAY-THROUGH-SUNDAY NIGHTS. Even more financially viable may be to drop Fridays. MATWATCH believes the drain in running arena bouts in cities drawing 300-400 or other money-losing crowds has run its course. With expansion of TV coverage in syndication and the various cable networks, wrestling is no longer a seven-night-a-week business. The sooner TBS recognizes this, the more millions it can save. The idea of it being wasteful to pay expensive salaries because wrestling performers do not work 5-7 nights a week is outdated, if profits are made in other venues.

2. GO TO AN EVENT-OF-THE-MONTH FORMAT. MATWATCH proposes an idea WCW president Jack Petrik suggested in 1988: a $9.95-a-month pay-per-view event with a slight modification: with a requirement of four CLASH specials on TBS per year (we'd slash that to three but TBS won't), our view is for six $10 pay specials and two (STARRCADE and the midyear BASH) blowout shows for $19.95. At one time, we would have opposed this. But if the company cuts back on its arena output, this will make more money. Why? Even with diluted creative potential, with an expanding pay universe, fans have a better mental view of spending $10 six times a year than $15-20 five times. Concentrate all TV and arena angles around building pay shows. Let the TV title and U.S. tag belts be the ones which change in the coliseums and save the big belts for pay shows. It is a format not unlike what boxing adopted in 1964 when its network FIGHT OF THE WEEK ended. Only it used closed circuit. Boxing is now almost exclusively big-event oriented. Weekly cable boxing shows are to build young contenders and most free TV bouts are for lesser championships.

3. STAY WITH ONE BOOKER. Whether Ole Anderson is the right choice, he is the one who has been made and TBS should stay with him at least for the duration of the year. The correct momentum has been made in abolishing the floundering committee system which exploded more political factions than any business could handle.

4. HIRE A CONSULTING FIRM TO ASSIST IN MARKETING. After reading last week's SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, it is our view that a company such as the International Management Group headed by Mark McCormack would be worth the money to advise TBS how to market its product as an AVIS challenger to the WWF's HERTZ. McCormack handles tournament creation and management for pro sports, endorsements for major athletes and television contracts. We are of the belief he may be the outlet which can push TBS in the proper direction to be a respected, rather than embarrassed competitor.

5. HIRE DOUGLAS MARLAND AS A CONSULTANT. Who is Douglas Marland? Only the most successful daytime TV soap opera writer of the past decade. Not as a permanent part of the WCW staff. But if it cost TBS $100,000, it would be money well spent for Marland to look at its WCW product and map out a 12-to-18 month bible of what could provide the best continuing storylines. He has won more Emmys than any soap writer, was the catalyst behind the "Luke and Laura" story on GENERAL HOSPITAL a decade ago and is now story chief of the resurging AS THE WORLD TURNS. Character relationships are his strength. Radical idea? Sure. And that's exactly what WCW needs.

6. REDUCE THE WEEKLY NUMBER OF TV HOURS. It will take guts. But MATWATCH would rather see a reduction to three weekly hours with an elimination of one of the two hours of WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING. Two consecutive hours on Saturday nights often appears to be more of a drain on attention spans than a true build for money shows. One appears to see the same guys rotate around the same jobbers so many times that refrigerator trips regularly increase. A

MATWATCH EDITORIAL

(Continued from Page 1)

A more polished single-hour production, in our view, can do more in a composite sense to leave viewers hanging for more than wearing them out, plus it will at least reduce at least by one hour the time commitment pressures on the organization.

7. BEEF UP THE FRONT OFFICE SIZE. This is now a cliche. But if this is to be a big-league outfit, it has to have the numbers of front people to make it work. In part, this is why 400 people show up at a New York card or 650 in Saginaw MI. This is why it took nearly two years for an appearance such as FAMILY FEUD. This is why nationally, this group still does not have the national recognition in the casual public's mind when pro wrestling is mentioned in conversation. Events coordinators are having to cover too much territory. Public relations and production specialists are overloaded. MATWATCH believes this is an essential key which may be the most underrated. And it is costly.

MATWATCH feels problems go far beyond these points. However, it is our view that these are more than starting blocks. They are overdue considerations which must be made if this company has any hope at all to become a profitable entity.

PINFALL PROFILE

Yes, the phones rang profusely Saturday before last and, I presume, into Sunday when I headed back to Jackson. And the verdict was 94% close to unanimous: MATWATCHERS are fed up with NWA main event pay-per-view climaxes.

The 116 calls registered before 4 p.m. on the day of May 20 tallied 109 blasting the finish of Flair vs. Luger at CAPITOL COMBAT with the other nine having either no opinion or feeling the ending left future heat for a followup.

Our unscientific poll had 58.6% rating the show good, 21.2% average, 8% fair or below average and 12.2% poor.

A typical reaction came from Bob Carmichael of Hannibal MO: "I'd heard all the stuff about Luger being in the hospital and how he may not be up to the match. But I thought surely, surely they won't do it to us THIS time. I'm not spending $15 on the next show because I've had it."

Mike Johnson, Macclenny FL: "Vince showed everybody how to change a title. It's as if the NWA is afraid and I can tell you Flair is losing more and more of a following with all of these cheap endings."

But another view came from Jeff Thomas of Woolwine VA: "A lot of people I know are complaining but the finish made you hate Flair more than ever and really set it up for a Flair-Sting match this summer. My only complaint is I do think Luger was hurt in the process."

A more philosophical view came from Art Ensminger of Huntsville AL: "CAPITOL COMBAT was an example of how far the NWA has slipped in pay-per-view. This wasn't a bad show. In fact, it was, overall, good to watch. But that's all it was---good. It didn't measure up to some of the great shows they gave us last year."

Preliminary indications place the buy-rate for this show, according to cable executives, at 1.2-1.4%. TBS has two critical problems at this juncture, from this perspective: 1) a doubting public now is less than trusting of a world title switch at a time when it is demanded more than at any point in the last three years and 2) only seven weeks to push a July 7 pay-per-view that will require much more of an intense personal push of new rivalries. Having Paul E. Dangerously back in the fold, one of the best in the business at personal-issue hype, cannot hurt. But the overriding question is how much damage has been done in the minds of hardcores, still the bulk of WCW's followers. Not even Flair-Sting may be able to neutralize that.

MATWATCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

SPECIAL NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS: effective with the July 16 issue, MATWATCH will have a rate increase, due to a hike in costs and to cover the pending postal rate increase. The new rates will be: (U.S./CANADA) $5 for 5 issues, $10 for 11 issues. (OVERSEAS) $9 for 5 issues, $18 for 11 issues.

An 11-issue order or renewal will be the maximum we will accept. The half-year and one-year commitments have been too extensive for us.

GIFT BONUS OFFER: Our bonus offer will provide you with one additional issue for every 5-issue set you give as a gift to a subscriber.

SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS can now be sent to our new address: 16 ROBIN HOOD LANE, JACKSON TN 38305. Please make all checks payable to STEVE BEVERLY....not MATWATCH.

One alteration to the current subscription rates: we will no longer accept longer than a 26-issue renewal on the current rates, through the July 9 issue.

CURRENT RATES: (U.S./CANADA) $6 for 7 issues, $19 for 26 issues.

(OVERSEAS) $10 for 7 issues, $36 for 26 issues.

TV TEMPO

Week of May 21-27

EDITOR'S NOTE: Four weeks from now, we will be moved in full to Jackson TN and resume our results portion of TV matches around the nation. Until then, we will bring you top LINES OF THE WEEK, TUBE TALK and VIDEO REVIEW segments of key programs in the USA.

VIDEO REVIEWS

LAWLER: ONLY FOR THE UNKNOWN

PEOPLE MAGAZINE ON TV, "The King," May 24, CBS-TV, 10-11 p.m. (EDT).

The PEOPLE profile of Jerry Lawler was another in the long line of high-gloss but little-depth infomagazine pieces now flooding network and syndicated television.

One could have taken the spot and interchanged in with AFTER HOURS, INSIDE EDITION or virtually any generic mag.

This was a piece strictly for the wrestling ignorant. Little information was available to enlighten the hardcore fan. But one had the idea Lawler could have been swapped with a surgeon, a minister or a truck driver as one who has long, demanding hours with the constant pressures of dealing with people.

Ironically, this effort---though alluding that Lawler dodged a question on wrestling's outcomes---was far more milquetoast on the subject than Connie Chung's frank, "Professional wrestling is fake," lead-in on the same network the previous Saturday.

Host Bree Walker said Lawler earns $300,000-a-year but did not quote a source. Hardcore fans likely nailed Walker when she proclaimed, "So far, nobody's been able to dethrone The King as USWA champion." Well, nobody outside of Memphis.

The most poignant moment came when Lawler said, "I feel like the only God-given talent I've had was art," as his cartoon sketches were shown. The most direct comment came when Walker said Lawler admitted he 'played around' with a specific wrestler (Jimmy Valiant) but "could have beaten him in 3 or 4 minutes."

Overall, the piece was good, yet, likely meaningless exposure for Lawler and a glaring fault was not attempting to use footage from the old Lawler-Andy Kaufman incidents on LATE NIGHT WITH DAVID LETTERMAN to enhance Lawler's celebrity.

RATING: DRAW....nothing special and a very antiseptic approach.

PERIOD DELIGHT: THE WAY IT WAS

WRESTLING THE WAY IT WAS: WRESTLING CLASSICS, Vols. I & II, Worldwide Entertainment Marketing, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10036-6758. (212) 930-4500.

This one is fun.

At least if you are a devotee of classic stars of the 1960s and early '70s, you'll enjoy this two-volume compilation of title matches and historic showdowns.

My favorite was the first up on Volume I, a 1961 NWA world title match between Buddy Rogers and Pat O'Connor. At 2-out-of-3 falls and with speed and science, this was wrestling as I remember growing up. Volume 2 offered a brutal conflict between Edouard Carpentier and Killer Kowalski.

If there is a criticism of the tapes, it's in the pitches for a 900 wrestling trivia game, which we, unfortunately, will see more of in various home video products---the commercial tie-in.

These videos will not attract a broad base of interest in the under-35 market but have strong traditional appeal for veteran fans. Production values are strong and editing has been carefully crafted.

RATING: POWERSLAM-PLUS...a good collectors' edition.

NO TAG TEAM ON ABC THIS FALL

NEW YORK----ABC's fall television lineup does not include the Jesse Ventura/Roddy Piper action-adventure series, TAG TEAM.

But the network has picked up an option for six episodes as a replacement series.

ABC only replaced five series on its current lineup. TAG TEAM is targeted for an 8 p.m. slot and could eventually land on Saturdays.

LINES OF THE WEEK

1. Paul E. Dangerously, PH: "If you'd like to talk about teeth, Cornette, tell your mama I'll come out here & kiss her again like I did last night." 2. Jim Cornette, PH, on Paul E.: "The only guy in the world who can clear a TV show faster than Andrew Dice Clay." 3. Vince McMahon/Jesse Ventura, WWF: (V) "We have no progress report on Hulk Hogan." (J) "I got one, McMahon. He's hurt & hurt bad." 4. Jesse, WWF: "I hate to see a blood friendship (Bolsheviks) break up. Wouldn't you be sad if you lost me here at the microphone?: 5. Ringside Ralph, AWA, on Jonnie Stewart's robe: "It looks like something out of Zsa Zsa Gabor's closet." 6. Ken Resnick, LPWA, on Judy Martin: "She's using a very scientific chokehold." 7. Cornette, PH, on Paul E.: "I've heard of being bit by a snake but I've never heard of being bought by a snake." 8. Jerry Lawler, PEOPLE: "If I insult wrestling fans, they appreciate it." 9. Bree Walker, PEOPLE: "So far, nobody's been able to dethrone The King (Lawler) as USWA champion." 10. Stewart, AWA: "The AWA pays me well over $150,000-a-year." 11. Lawler, PEOPLE, on fans: "They love to see violent things happen to other people." 12. Jim Ross, CAPITOL COMBAT, on Cornette: "He has girth."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Lawler, PEOPLE: "The traveling, the white lines and the hotels: it's boring. But it's a necessary evil." 2. Ventura, WWF: "Let's be professional, Mc Mahon. Just because your hero got hurt...."

QUESTIONS - 1. Cornette, PH, to Teddy Long: "Have you checked his (Paul E.'s) credit rating?" 2. Ventura, WWF, on what makes Bad News Brown run: "Are you sure it wasn't Okerlund's breath?"

BEST ANGLE - Earthquake squashing of Hogan, WWF.

BEST PERFORMANCE - McMahon, WWF, barking orders at rescue crew and playing the moping host after the angle. Outstanding job!

BLOOPER - Resnick, LPWA (BLONNY Blackstone).

BOO AWARD - John Tatum, USWA, for slapping around Tessa. Is there no end to women-bashing on this show???

TUBE TALK

The buyrate for CAPITOL COMBAT appears to be around 1.3%. The San Francisco area reported in with 0.8% and lots of 1s and under in the rest of the West. A number of 3s in the South. ....No matter Ole's end of the pendulum as a booker, he's too gruff for TV color. Sounds just plain mean, as he often does in person. I know. I remember two 1978 interviews I had with him as a TV reporter in Columbus GA.... Teddy Long guested on THE LARRY KATZ SHOW the night of CAPITOL COMBAT and was a big hit. On the same show, Joe Pedicino predicted it would be two years before the NWA could credibly do a cage match again....the Twin Cities' WRESTLING RADIO has been canceled but Minneapolis area fans now pick up WRESTLING WEEK with Phil Olson on WDGY-AM....Some lobbying going on to try to get the Memphis show back on my station (WBBJ) in Jackson TN....Lots of CWA fans still talking about the angle with The Snowman two weeks back on Memphis TV....Baltimore's Kimberly Murphy, a LARRY KATZ regular, was recently on the cable VWA HOTLINE in Virginia. Some caller addressed the 26-year-old Ms. Murphy as "that bag from Baltimore"....If you wonder why things like this continue to happen, so do I: a large portion of COMBAT tix had....you guessed it....the WRONG times (8 p.m.). In addition, more than 100 mad ticketholders were given seats which did not exist because the TV cameras and entranceway took them up. Most were accomodated but still irritated....Mr. Wrestling II to make a guest appearance on upcoming NWA show....Kerry Von Erich no-showed two scheduled NWA TVs the past week, so he's yesterday's news....A high-ranking WGN-TV exec declared to an advertiser in the last week that no NWA show is scheduled on the Chicago outlet, nor will it be....I continue to be impressed with the production values on the LPWA show. Tor Berg is doing it right.

MATWATCH HOTLINE

Until a permanent phone can be established in our new home of Jackson TN, you may contact us most evenings at HOLIDAY INN of JACKSON (901) 668-4100. We will be there most nights after 7:30 p.m. If you miss us, please leave a message with the front desk. Ask for Room 132.

Friday nights through Sunday afternoons, you can still call the Auburn AL HOTLINE number of (205) 826-RING. The answering machine will be connected and if you miss us, please leave a number. We will try to get back to you but please understand, we are trying to sell our home, so there are some hours we have to step out for showings. We'll hope to have a new Jackson number for you next week.

NOSTALGIA NETWORK: I suppose we can call the NWA the Nostalgic Wrestling Alliance now. Ole Anderson's importing of Paul Orndorff, Buddy Landell, The Iron Sheik and Junkyard Dog is taking this group back ten years far faster than Ric Flair did as booker.

MR. WONDERFUL: Orndorff has worked a few indies and was recently spotted at a Baptist church in suburban Atlanta by sports columnist Richard Hyatt.

LOPPING LANDELL: Buddy's trip into the NWA likely cancels him from a June 12 date against Brad Armstrong in Vicksburg MS.

HERITAGE U.S.A.: That Vicksburg show is one being carried under the Heritage banner. It will topline the Royal Family (reportedly as faces) vs. The New Fantastics as heels.

A FEW WORDS: I can't help but comment. The double standard between announcers and wrestlers continues. The NWA takes back a guy (JYD) who walked out on a pay-per-view (last May's WRESTLE WAR) and a guy who made a spectacle of himself (Sheik) at the Nashville Airport. And both bombed as draws last year. You figure it.

OTHER FRONTS: WWF crowds continue to languish, though Titan probably drew an apparent sellout over the weekend in Anaheim (8,000).

THE TRUTH WILL OUT: Joe Pedicino's honesty with Georgia fans about why JYD no-showed a Carrollton show the night before CAPITOL COMBAT was refreshing. But some of Joe's GEORGIA ALL-STAR guys who run small towns didn't like it. "We might need JYD one day," said one.

THANK YOU, FANS: Rocky Mountain Wrestling Association ran Fan Appreciation Night in Denver last Thursday. Randy Rhodes vs. Barry O in a bullrope match toplined.

STOP THE RED: The latest on the widely reported and denied sale of the NWA to COMSAT. A new executive of Bob Wussler's satellite outfit was quoted as saying one of his first jobs was to "stop the bleeding in wrestling...and I don't mean blood."

NO STARS: Grizzly Smith's Five Star

MATWATCHING

Wrestling is no longer new. It no longer exists. Financial backers pulled out after two weeks.

LET GEORGE DO IT: On the other hand, George Scott says he's "doing fine" with his North American group. He's concentrating on TV and says he'll only run two or three house dates in June.

OLE'S DOGHOUSE: Ole has banished Norman (Mike Shaw) from TV for six weeks. He hates the gimmick and will return Norm in July as Norman the Truckdriver. OK. Shaw is less than thrilled. Ole reportedly told him if he wasn't under contract, he wouldn't even use Norman. That's real incentive.

MORE DOWNERS: Expect Mike Rotunda, Tom Zenk and possibly even Brian Pillman to receive diluted pushes.

STIRRING THE POT: Overheard in one NWA dressing room: The Steiners are less than enchanted with Ole and reports from New York are that Vince McMahon may try to stir the pot and try to get Rick and Scott---and possibly even Sting to break their contracts and join the Road Warriors north. Don't bet on it but Vince would love to stir the pot.

SCALP CITY: You'll love this. Scalpers are now trying to hawk the free tickets to the Center Stage matches when the NWA tapes there in Atlanta. TBS says it's up to the Center Stage to prosecute. Why bother.

DOG OF A MATCH: Tell me, honestly: How many of you are hanging onto your seat for this Junkyard Dog-Ric Flair main event on TBS' CLASH XI: COASTAL CRUSH JUne 13? The rest of the card: Rock & Roll Express-Midnights, Steiners-DOOM, Tommy Rich-Bam Bam Bigelow, Barry Windham-Doug Furnas, Arn Anderson-Orndorff, Pillman-Mark Callous, Southern Boys-Freebirds, and Rotunda/Zenk vs. Samoans.

LAYOFFS: I'm still hearing four weeks out for Lex Luger. It's all but certain for Flair-Sting at the July 7 BASH but I still believe Sting's pushing it too quickly.

WINDY ONE: Hurricane Smith retained the WINDY CITY belt Thursday night in Cambridge IL over Ken Patera.

HOT DELAWARE: Tully Blanchard is set to meet Steve Williams in a June 10 topliner in Newark DE.

RATINGS RAP

PRIME TIME NOSES MAIN EVENT

FOR CABLE LEAD; WWF SYNDIE TOPS

Despite a virtual tie in total homes, USA Network's PRIME TIME WRESTLING held the cable ratings lead for the third consecutive week, according to Nielsen figures.

For the week ending May 21, PTW posted a 3.0/4.6 to top the list, despite a 10 percent drop from the previous week. Sunday's NWA MAIN EVENT on TBS revived to a 38% jump from its perilous low of the May 14 edition. NME scored a 2.9 rating and 6.2 share, obviously drawing a number of curiousity-viewers from the previous night's CAPITOL COMBAT.

The big fluctuations came from USA'S WWF ALL-AMERICAN show, which posted a season high for any week other than the day of WRESTLEMANIA, and TBS' WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING, which dropped below a 2 rating for the first time since last summer. The 1.9 figure for the hour before COMBAT just barely drew a million homes.

POWER HOUR, in Paul E. Dangerously's second week as returning co-host, rebounded for a 31% gain from the May 11 outing.

In syndication, the WWF held its comfortable lead over the NWA.

CABLE
Week Ending May 21

Show/Date	Rating	Share	Homes
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 5/21)	3.0	4.6	1.59 m
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 5/20)	2.9	6.2	1.58 m
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 5/20)	2.8	8.4	1.48 m
NWA WORLD CHAMP. (TBS 5/19)	1.9	4.7	1.04 m
NWA POWER HOUR (TBS 5/18)	1.7	3.5	927,000
NWA POWER (Repeat) (TBS 5/19)	0.8	7.0	436,000

SYNDICATION (Week Ending May 6)

WWF	8.8	251 stations	97% U.S.
NWA	6.5	175 stations	93% U.S.

MATWATCH SHOPPERS NETWORK

TIM SORKIN, P.O. Box 5166, EVANSTON IL 60204-5166, has a massive list of tapes for sale/trade, including Japan originals. He's also seeking NWA WORLD WIDE/NWA PRO shows June 1988-present, Mwmphis arena (1984-87).

CRAIG REEDY, 12 Danielle Ct., VERMONT, SOUTH VICTORIA, 3133, AUSTRALIA, is trying to research how far back ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION newspaper ads go back for Friday wrestling shows.

WRESTLING SPEAKOUT is a new biweekly bulletin from Andy Vineberg with results, interviews and trivia contests. $4.00 for 6 issues. Write Andy at 11 Wally Ct., LUTHERVILLE MD 21093.

STEVE GENNARELLI, 69 Kendall Ave., BINGHAMTON NY 13903, is selling wrestling magazines from the early '70s to the present. Write Steve for a free list.

RICKY SHORT, Rt. 2, Box 297, GRETNA VA 24557, is urgently seeking Florida tapes and ICW from October 1989-present. Also, he'd like tapes of any new independents with TV shows.

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